

THE VILLAGE OF TEPOZTLAN

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Entering either from above or below one passes first 361
through a belt of tilled ground: corn- and beanfields, 241
each small plot separated from its neighbor by a wall [717]
made of heaped fragments of the abundant volcanic
rubble. These are the *milpas*; by means of these little
properties the villagers are fed, and to them their
loyalties are bound.

The houses begin abruptly; they are set close be- 363
side the road; most are heavily shaded by trees. The
streets are set with stones, rough hewn or placed just
as they were found. Only near the *plaza* do the streets
become wider, straighter, and smoother; those on the
margins of the town are narrow and rough and often
crooked. Most have steep grades; when this is so there
is not a gradual gradient, but a series of alternating
slants and levels. So the streets were laid out before
the white men came. The method suggests the alter-
nating stairways and platforms of the Indian *teocalli*;
certainly it is adapted to a traffic made up solely of
laden men and women; when the roads were first made
there were no pack animals in Mexico. Today too
the streets are very still; in them no wheel ever
moves.

Tepoztlán was a *pueblo* of the Tlahuica, one of the 174
Nahuatl-speaking tribes¹ that made up the last immi- [197]
gration south to the plateau region before the coming
of the Spaniards. The ideograph of the town, an ax
set in the sign for "mountain" or accompanied by

¹ Others were the Xochimilca, Chalca, Tepaneca, Acolhua, Tlaxcalteca, and
Azteca.